

THE IRAQI INSURGENT
MOVEMENT

by
SGT Christopher Alexander
CPT Charles Kyle
MAJ William S. McCallister

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ABSTRACT

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Issue: A successful insurgency is preventing the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and Combined Joint Task Force –7 (CJTF-7) from providing a safe and secure environment in Iraq.

Discussion: The reason that CPA initiatives have not yet caught the imagination or secured the participation of the Iraqi people is due to cultural, not ideological factors. Iraq’s cultural environment represents a challenge not easily mastered by Western ideological models and crisis management techniques alone. The Tribal Ethos remains the basis for most security, economic, and political discussions in Iraq and must by default be considered in long-term security and stability solutions.

Recommendation: This new Restorationist insurgency movement (against Western occupation) is using a hybrid method that incorporates urban (terrorist) and protracted (popular) insurgency strategies and exploits the tribal ethos to create crisis and instability to isolate CPA / CJTF-7 from the Iraqi populace. A strong synchronized Tribal Leader engagement policy is a more effective means of achieving CPA / CJTF-7 strategic goals. We must create a committed local population in targeted areas, to include the local and provincial leaders in security, social and economic affairs; concurrently the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) must be empowered to ensure stable national level governance. Establishing trust and confidence between Coalition and tribal groups will neutralize the insurgents and create the conditions for CPA assisted political, economic, and social programs to shape anew the nation of Iraq.

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GLOSSARY

Beijats: a Clan of the Albu Nasir Tribe (six sub - clans).

Conspiratorial Strategy: it emphasizes an elite small scale organization and low level violence.

Insurgency: A struggle between a non ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously uses political resources (e.g. organizational expertise, propaganda and demonstrations) and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics. (Bard O'Neill)

Jihad: (literally) struggle. The term jihad is often used to refer to the religious duty of holy war against the infidels, to extend the boundaries of Islam into non-Islamic territories; it is derived from the word jahada, which means to strive or endeavor.

Mujahideen: combatants on behalf of a jihad.

Restorationist: To restore an elite group opposed to an occupying authority in order to regain political and economic power.

Sheik: local ruler – a title of respect given to a religious leader or elder authority; it is also used to refer to the head of state in small Gulf states. (Gold, 2003)

Society: According to Dr. Richard Law of Washington State University, a society is any group of people living together in a group and constituting a single related, interdependent community. This word is frequently taken to include entire national communities; we might, for instance, comment upon some aspect of U.S. society. Society can also be used to refer to smaller groups of people, as when we refer to "rural societies" or "academic society," etc. Society is distinguished from culture in that society generally refers to the community of people while culture generally refers to systems of meaning.

Strategy of Protracted Popular War: this stresses political primacy, mass organizations and gradually escalating violence.

Tribal Culture: According to Dr. Richard Law of Washington State University, culture refers to the cumulative deposits of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, and notions of time acquired by a group of people in the course of generations. The main facets of tribal culture include honor (shame and honor), hospitality, warrior hood and revenge (blood feud). Demonstrating ones courage in battle is the key to understanding what motivates young men to fight. Goal is to avoid humiliation and acquire honor.

Urban Warfare Strategy: it involves small-scale organizations and low to moderate terrorists or guerilla attacks in urban centers with some proponents envisioning an eventual transition to warfare in the rural areas.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“Liberal democracy is based on the Western idea of autonomous individuals committed to a public good, but that’s not how members of these tight and bounded kin groups see the world. Their world is divided into two groups; kin and strangers.” Robin Fox as quoted in New York Times, September 28, 2003

At least three quarters of the population of Iraq belong to one of the one hundred and fifty of the nation’s tribes. Many large tribes contain a mix of religions and ethnicities ranging from Sunni to Shia, Kurd to Arab to Persian. Tribal confederacies can date thousands of years, or can be the creation of political expediency in the past decade. If properly engaged by CPA and CJTF-7, Iraqi tribes can become a key factor in the promotion of a safe and secure environment in Iraq.

The purpose of this paper is to explain why the tribal confederacies of Iraq view the current policies of CPA and CJTF-7 as disenfranchising and culturally insensitive, which can feed an insurgency movement.

The paper also identifies that CJTF-7 and CPA are in fact engaged in an insurgency movement that is unique in the way it blends urban terrorist and protracted popular insurgency strategies to create crisis and instability to isolate CPA/CJTF-7 from the Iraqi populace.

A strong, synchronized tribal engagement policy is a more effective means of achieving CPA/CJTF-7 strategic goals. The policy recommends engaging tribal leaders in the short term to provide security in their respective tribal areas to halt the internal and external import of arms, foreign fighters, and Former Regime Loyalists, into and around Iraq, with particular emphasis on the Sunni Triangle. On several occasions in the past 15 years the former regime effectively used this tactic to obtain short-term security while implementing more effective long-term solutions to security issues.

¹Robin Fox as quoted by John Tierney, “Iraqi Family Ties Complicate American Efforts for Change”, New York Times, September 28, 2003

Tribal engagement is neither a “silver bullet” nor a long-term solution to the security needs of the Iraqi people. Its purpose is to reduce attacks on troops, infrastructure, and innocent Iraqis while buying time for creating government at the lowest possible level. This policy would be effective in both the countryside and urban areas, although Baghdad’s detribalized nature would constrain its application. Simultaneously, long term actions designed to promote a modern democratic state would continue, gradually eroding the tribal power base with prosperity only a modern democratic state can offer.

The analogy to this concept is the “block wardens” of 19th century US cities like New York or Chicago. When a job or special favor was needed in a certain ethnic group, or tribe, the bloc warden who delivered support for certain candidates received “favors” for their effort. Over time prosperity created opportunity, this slowly dissolved the tribal nature of the various ethnic groups, and allowed democratic institutions at the lowest level.

Ultimately, the CPA’s tribal engagement policy must reflect the cultural reality of the countryside, supported by CJTF-7 counter insurgency efforts emphasizing information operations. The inclusion of sheikhs and their tribal constituents are crucial to achieving coalition success.

Chapter 2

INSURGENCY

The Theory

Type of Insurgency

There is a significant difference between the types, strategies and methods employed during an insurgency. The various strategic approaches of insurgents seek to maximize the effectiveness of political techniques and forms of warfare to achieve success. According to Bard O’Neill, author of “Insurgency and Terrorism”, there are seven types of insurgencies. These are: Anarchist, Egalitarian (communist and socialist), Traditionalist, Pluralist, Secessionist, Reformist, and Preservationist. As proposed in this document, an eighth type of insurgency, called Restorationist, has been identified.

Type of insurgency	Goal	Example
Restorationist	To restore an elite group opposed to an occupying authority in order to regain political and economic power	Afghanistan and Iraq
Anarchist	To eliminate all institutionalized political arrangements; they view authority relationships as unnecessary and illegitimate	Black Cells in Germany
Egalitarian (Communist and Socialist)	To impose a new system based on distribution equality and centrally controlled structures to mobilize the people and radically transform the social structure within an existing political community	Shining Path in Peru
Traditionalist	To displace the political system; the values they articulate are primordial and sacred ones rooted in ancestral ties and religion	Hezbollah in Lebanon
Pluralist	To displace the political system in favor of individual freedom and liberty	UNITA in Angola
Secessionist	To withdraw from the present political community and constitute a new and independent political community	Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka
Reformist	To gain autonomy and reallocate political and material resources within the present political system	Kurds in Iraq
Preservationist	To maintain the existing political system by engaging in illegal acts against non ruling groups/the authorities who want to change	Ulster Defense Assoc. in N-Ireland

Table 1: Types of insurgency

Strategy

Urban (terrorist) strategy. This strategy employs terrorism within urban areas. The object is to create instability and crisis in both the government's ability to react and attacks the government's credibility directly. The strategy exploits the complexity and anonymity of urban areas. On the other hand, guerilla operations in urban areas are less independent than those in rural areas because the governments vigilance is greater and the possibilities of betrayal and government reprisals greater.

Protracted Popular War Strategy. Primary objective is to impose a type of warfare upon an enemy that renders his technological superiority ineffective. The first phase is organization. This entails establishing an appropriate political-military infrastructure (shadow government) to isolate the government from the people. In the second phase, armed actions are carried out against government security agencies. The government responds by militarizing the state. The final phase, mobile conventional war, is initiated when the insurgents judge that the balance of power is in their favor and government forces can be defeated by overt military actions. The transition from one phase to another depends on favorable conditions with movement between phases acceptable if conditions warrant.

The Conspiratorial Strategy. In this strategy a small and well-disciplined conspiratorial group forms a party to exploit grievances that have largely alienated elements of the population from the government. In many cases the removal of the authorities is considered necessary to achieve the real goal, which is to change policies and/or a political system that insurgents consider illegitimate. In other situations the aim may be to replace the authorities to prevent major policy initiatives that will upset the existing distribution of social, economic and political privileges (preservationist insurgents) or because the leaders are perceived to be corrupt and inefficient (and thus opposed by reformist insurgents). The insurgent does not seek to incite the general population against the government but it will mobilize segments for support in riots and demonstrations. When the government is no longer sure of the loyalty of the military and police, the government can be collapsed by terrorism and mass demonstrations.

Military Focus Strategy. This strategy subordinates political action and gives primacy to military action instead. No systematic and sustained effort is made to acquire popular support; instead favorable

conditions are created by military actions to accelerate the revolutionary process. This strategy is the easiest to initiate, requires less organization, and popular support.

Methods

The Iraqi example is best described as a Restorationist insurgency designed to restore an elite group opposed to an occupying authority, in order to regain political power. It is a hybrid of urban (terrorist), conspiratorial and protracted popular insurgency strategies, designed to create the conditions where the current ruling authority is forced to overreact and lose credibility as a liberator. The methods applied are acts of urban terror against population, infrastructure, and security services, as well as guerilla attacks against conventional military forces (IEDs, ambushes) in rural areas. Demonstrations and propaganda events are supporting methods to influence national, regional, and international opinion to justify violence against the ruling authority and to discredit the Coalition.

It is important to note that there are several differences between terrorist and guerilla tactics. The defining measure of the terrorist is that he does not differentiate between combatants and non-combatants, whereas the guerilla normally attacks a military or governmental target. This is evident by guerilla tactics in the countryside against military convoys, personnel and facilities, while in the urban areas the terrorist use bombings in highly populated civilian areas.

Insurgent means	Counter insurgent means
Propaganda, winning popular support	Public relations, Mil Civic Action, PSYOP, population control, political/social reforms
Organization	Destroy insurgent organization and arrest cadres and replace with own organization
Terrorism	Antiterrorism: defensive measures to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts. Counterterrorism: offensive measures to prevent, deter and respond to terrorism
Guerrilla warfare	Defeat insurgent forces, undermine morale, deny/destroy his bases and resources, counter intel
Conventional warfare	Conventional warfare based on movement and superior firepower
Outside support	Cut outside support, isolate

Table 2: Insurgent-Counter Insurgent Means (Bard O'Neill)

Consideration

Insurgency has been a method of belligerence against established governments throughout the ages. The Maoist “people’s war” in China, the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru and the IRA in Ireland are but a few examples of insurgency movements. Defeating an insurgency requires the right mix of military, economic, and political solutions. A given insurgency is the product of its cultural environment. Culture shapes motivations and modes of operation. Western cultural constructs constrain political and military thinking on the subject of counter-insurgency. Culture matters and cannot be consigned a minor role in counter-insurgency planning and execution as it is the crucial factor in understanding the motivations of an opponent. Undue emphasis on military action alone, one that disregards the cultural context fueling an insurgency, will result in failure for the counter-insurgency. History is replete with examples in which government forces won every battle but lost the war. This same cultural imperative applies in regard to developing appropriate economic and political programs, whether rebuilding a newly liberated country, or countering an insurgent’s strategy. Government political and economic programs must echo the culture it professes to assist. Policy makers must always consider that newly introduced political and economic programs may themselves be the root cause of growing frustration and discontent, since they are perceived by the general populace as an attack against their cultural norms and way of life. The challenge of newly introduced policy is compounded when religious sentiments and motivations are added to the mix. A perceived arrogance on the part of the governing authority in regard to indigenous cultural and religious norms will only fuel and add credibility to an incipient insurgency movement.

Iraq is a nation of tribes. The fact is that the tribal ethos continues to shape how Iraqis think about themselves and non-Iraqis alike. Tribal Ethos plays a tremendous role in Iraqi’s daily rituals, relationships, and worldview. Acknowledging Iraq as a nation of tribes is the first step in gaining a greater insight into the representational system already existent in Iraqi culture. This understanding will support CPA and Coalition efforts in the shaping of loyalty to a democratic central government and assist in creating a safe and secure environment for rebuilding efforts to mature. We are engaged in a game without a clear appreciation of the rules and rituals that regulate play. Coalition counter-insurgency efforts must focus on returning honor (*sharaf*) to the Iraqi people, engaging tribal decision makers, and work within cultural norms to build a modern democratic Iraqi nation.

Chapter 3

TRIBAL ENVIROMENT

“Me against my brother, my brother and I against our cousin, the three of us against the world.”

The Iraqi Tribal Environment

In the 19th century, prior to British Colonial rule, the Ottomans had gone far to fragment the great tribal confederations of Iraq and to restrain the dominant sheiks. Ottoman tribal policy centered on alliances built with groups of subjects. Within the Ottoman system, this collection of groups could be a village, a tribe, a city district, or economic units such as trades or guilds. A liaison, usually a person exercising moral authority or other form of legitimacy within his own community, represented each group. His role was to voice the complaints or grievances of his constituents to Ottoman officials and ensure that the group complied with government directives.

British colonial policy chose instead to enforce order by reestablishing the power of tribal leaders through payoffs and arms distributed by the central government. Such a policy lacked a set of satisfactory mechanisms by which various political factions, both tribal and detribalized, could either be reconciled with one another or contained within some overall factional framework of accepted Western political practice. The rural communities remained tribal societies, loyal to their sheiks and suspicious of any authority outside the kinship group. As a result, singular communal identities formed the foundation of the political system, preventing serious efforts to meld the various inhabitants of Iraq into a “conceptually western” nation-state.²

Tribal Culture

Tribal culture is extremely resilient and adaptive to changes in the social, economic, and political environment. Neither modern socio-political ideologies, nor the state itself has succeeded in totally replacing or eliminating the Tribal Ethos as an organizing principle and its influence in determining behavior.. With the demise of nomadism Iraqi tribal culture has mutated and evolved. The Tribal Ethos adapted itself to a sedentary agricultural society linked to a market economy and/or migrated to the urban centers. Although settled in urban areas, individuals retain their tribal names, kinship

² Ibid, pages 116-118

networks and value systems, common residency patterns in city and provincial towns, and most importantly, kinship loyalties. Tensions between tribalized and detribalized, or non-tribal segments of society do exist. One reason for this tension is due to the penetration of customary tribal law into the urban areas. Tribal groupings have imposed their customary tribal law and codes, reestablishing quasi-feudal domains. The old legal duality, of state and tribal law, which had been to a large extent separated spatially along urban and rural lines, now cuts, in varying degrees, throughout urban social life, unsettling urban spaces of mixed tribal/non-tribal neighborhoods.

Although there is a separation between groups and individuals have always moved economically, politically, and sometimes socially, back and fourth across communal lines. A single tribe can claim both Sunnis and Shia, and confessional groups like these intermarry. Nonetheless, these groups remain a collection of separate identities that has always challenged the integrity of the Iraqi state. However much Sunni and Shia, Arab and Kurd, Muslim and Christian, have sat in councils of government, they have often placed their interests as individuals within families and communal groups above the interest of the state.

Tribal Society

The fundamental aspect of tribal society is extended kinship. It must be noted that tribes are more than just kin-based groupings. An individual's stated attachment to a particular genealogical heritage is, at the tribal level, partly a political act, since tribal genealogies are usually based on fictive kinship ties, if they "exist" at all. In claiming a particular ancestry, people necessarily align themselves with a given political charter and strategy, which cannot be glossed simply as kinship. Tribes exist in a perpetual state of flux as associations and alliances of their constituent groupings shift and members move across permeable boundaries. In this sense, tribal identity is not a given; it also incorporates an invented quality that provides a context for political and social action. The Saddam regimes exploitation of its own "tribal" identity represents one of the most obvious manifestations of this phenomenon.

At least three-quarters of the Iraqi population are members of one of the nation's 150 tribes.³ Family ties and a strict honor code bind them more than ethnic background, religion, or professional association. Honor is the most important supreme value in Arab life, more important than life itself. A

³ See Stephen J. Glain, "Stronghold Can Backfire: Iraqi Tribes are Key Source of Loyalty, Rebellion." WALL STREET JOURNAL, May 23, 2000.

man without honor is considered dead. Hence the saying, “It is better to die with honor than live with humiliation.”

Most large tribes have a hierarchical structure, with a noble lineage, a number of commoner clans/lineages, as well as client lineages. Some of these tribes explicitly recognize the heterogeneity of their component parts and are called confederacies. Inter-tribal conflicts and coalitions profoundly impact on tribal structure. The degree of complexity and internal stratification of a given tribe depends primarily on two external factors: the availability of resources and the extent of state interference in internal affairs. Private justice is meted out through a network in which traditional and/or religious leaders determine the outcome of feuds between clans and conflict between individuals.

The Saddam regime empowered a network of tribes to shore up the institutions of state. Tribes took three forms. The first was Political tribes, whose power was expressed in the hierarchy of families, kin, and tribal allies integrated into the state in order to ensure status, legitimacy, and power. Fictive tribes, or tribes of political expediency, provided legitimacy to a government that proved itself incapable of ruling a modern urban society. The third type of tribe, the military tribe, emerged after the 1991 intifada when Saddam armed tribes of every ethnicity and sect of Islam in the defense of his regime. None of these above tribes were traditional, but instead were makeshift tribes that included Iraqi Sunni and Shia, as well as Kurds; all tied directly or indirectly to the premier tribe, the Tikritis (Albu Nasir). Collecting tribute and exercising police and judicial power, they became an extension of the state itself. Armed with machine guns, rocket launchers and mortars provided by the regime, loyal tribes imposed the authority of Baghdad in the countryside.

Tribal Loyalty

Two of the most important features of Iraqi tribes are their segmentary nature and kinship loyalty. Segmentation refers to the hierarchical nature of tribal kinship structures, and describes the way in which the various sub-components of a tribe coalesce to form higher-level entities when opposed to other entities of the same order. While loyalty discusses how they see themselves, their family, and their nation while compared to others that western society would consider the same.

The segmentation principle applies throughout the tribe, from lowest level in kinship structure, the extended family, to the highest level, the confederation.

In the Tribal Segmentary Nature chart (page 10, Figure 1) groups H and I would act together as group D, if confronted by group E. Similarly, in the case of dispute with C, both D and E would engage in collective action as B. Segmentation means that groups which may be potentially hostile toward one another, or even involved in open conflict, are able to come together when confronted by an external threat which endangers them both. By implication, segmentation is also a means through which tribal militias may be rapidly mobilized to confront a common enemy. Historical alliances and enmities exist between all Iraqi tribes, some more enduring than others and resurface from time-to-time in violent inter-and intra-tribal conflict. As one of the organizing principles for these inter-and intra-tribal disputes, segmentation entails an important military function. In case of a tribe holding a neutral attitude, the principle may be potentially exploited to generate support of Coalition security objectives.

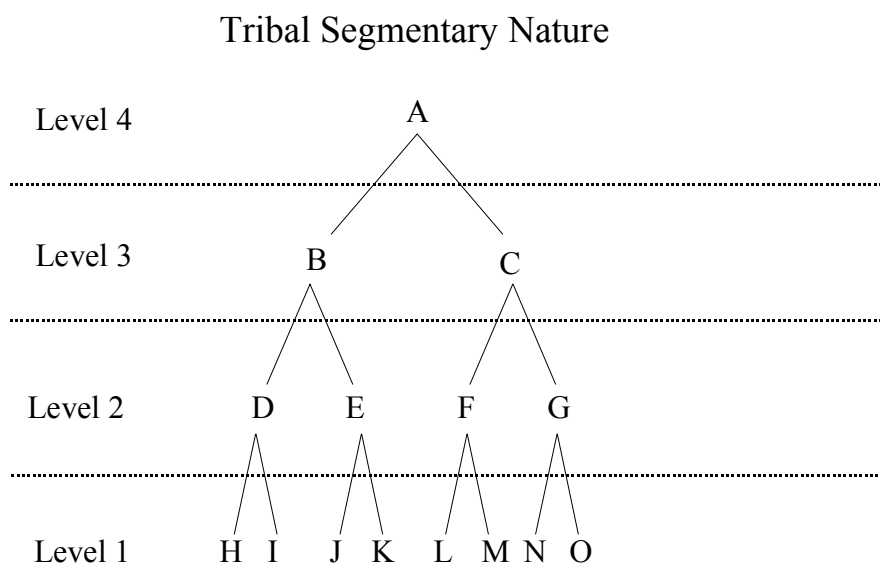


Figure 1: Tribal Segmentary Nature

The Coalition has embraced the idea that Iraq is divided into 3 information environments made of ethnic and religious categories; the Kurds, Sunnis and Shia. This idea perpetuates the concept that the populace and its loyalty are easily categorized within each of these groups. In northern Iraq this could be perceived as true, due to the aggregation of several tribes into political parties, such as the Kurdish Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. One could easily relate stability in the north to

Kurdish nationalism, but both the PUK and KDP are political extensions of the Talabani and Barzani tribes, not political parties in the Western sense. In Arab Iraq however, dominant religious organizations like the Hawza do not represent the population as effectively as Arab tribal bonds greatly outweigh Sunni and Shia associations.

In Iraqi culture the strongest loyalty bonds are to the immediate and extended family. Loyalty to clan and tribe come after family and extended family. The tribal leader provides the mediation and direction for the tribe.

The next stages of Iraqi loyalty are built upon the tribes, from there the tribes create regions and the regions form the nation of Iraq. Only after national ties does the separation between Sunnis and Shias of another ethnicity or nationality exist. For example, a Shia Iraqi will side with a Sunni Iraqi in a conflict with Persian Shia. As seen in Figure 2: Iraqi Loyalties Model, the idea of religious loyalties only exists when other commonalities cannot be established. CPA and CJTF-7 must recognize that loyalties are the true boundaries, not the artificial boundaries of Islamic divides.

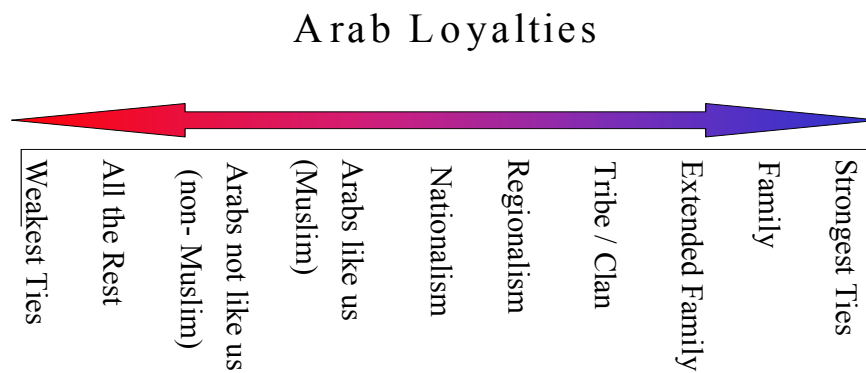


Figure 2: Iraqi Loyalties Model

Chapter 4

INSURGENCY WITHIN THE IRAQI TRIBAL CULTURE

Tribal Warfare/Insurgency

The 1968 Ba'athist return to office is a perfect example of a Restorationist insurgency exploiting tribal culture to regain and maintain political power. One hundred fifty to four hundred hardcore party loyalists, applying a conspiratorial strategy, overthrew the ruling military junta. After seizing power, Saddam stated, "We cannot allow some three or four officers riding tanks to come and take power again". The Ba'ath insurgents exploited four of their key advantages. They came from the provinces, semi-Bedouin towns and villages, and understood tribal culture implicitly. They were aware of the power of the military and the danger it represented to their precarious hold on power. They also understood the need for mass organization and their own tribal segmentary nature. Two parallel processes were initiated. The first was to expand party organization and means of control over the Ba'ath party, which grew from a few hundred to tens of thousands to 1.8 million people in less than 8 years. The second process was to mobilize and integrate clans and family networks into security apparatus, e.g., military and security services. The clans were controlled through three government agencies. The first was the Military Bureau of the Party which was in charge of selecting cadets as well as indoctrinating and organizing party members in the military. Members of the Beijats, or close allies of the Beijat clan, controlled this office. The second process was the National Security Bureau and third, the Committee of Tribes. Combining these three bodies, Ba'ath leadership could pick and choose from the various tribal lineages in the Sunni Triangle to fill key security positions. Kinship networks extended the narrow base of the state elite, provided manpower to manage state machinery, and helped stabilize structures of power.

Assessment

The Restorationist's true threat lies in its political potential rather than its military power. The 1968 Restorationist model provides today's insurgency leadership with a tested template to recruit, organize, and implement guerilla operations against Coalition forces. Former Regime Loyalists provide the management skills, as well as plan, fund, and coordinate military operations. They exploit their implicit understanding of tribal culture and are currently reaching out to segments of former tribal clientele. Payment for military attacks against Coalition targets are increasingly seen as the only means

to provide for the family and is often used as a recruitment tool, due to high unemployment. The insurgents understand tribal customs, social activities and relationships, and need only ask if the ruling authorities respect tribal honor to provide an argument for resistance. While a promise to restore the Saddam regime is no longer an option, promises of special status for tribes may give hope to the disenfranchised tribal members for a better future. The greatest wild card that the insurgents can exploit is the Coalition's lack of cultural understanding and ability to communicate with the rural population to reinforce the idea that CPA/CJTF-7 policies are attacks against cultural norms, honor, and way of life.

Examples of these attacks are:

The rough handling of patriarchal family heads in front of their families during cordon and sweep/knock operations that shames family honor and requires revenge in the form of resistance.

CPA's lack of inclusion of tribal leaders in policymaking and implementation shames tribal leaders and ignores thousands of years of Arab socio-political culture. The impression we create is that of a "well-armed adolescent" imposing idealistic but culturally insensitive policy through superior firepower.

Fighting tribal groupings on their own terrain is difficult. Size, capabilities, actionable intelligence, and cultural understanding limit CJTF-7, especially when confronting a multi-faceted threat to stability. Internal power struggles, a limited insurgency, skirmishes with foreign Islamic extremists, and homegrown banditry continue to challenge CJTF-7 and the CPA. It is extremely difficult to protect a large perimeter in the face of a mobile foe. Realistically, one must ask whether there are ways of managing the tribal leadership other than through exclusion. Are there tribal needs that the government can use as a source of leverage? Can the CPA opt for a mixture of warfare, diplomatic maneuvering, and economic persuasion? What approaches can be employed to draw tribal confederacies into an emerging security system? Can the Coalition profit by employing economic, diplomatic, and military means to include select tribal leadership to reduce tensions, assist in defeating threats in key geographic areas, and provide limited security for key infrastructure?

Iraqi history has shown that there is a dialectical relationship between the authority of the state and the power of the tribal elites. That is, when the state was powerful, it would tend toward direct rule by avoiding, or even eliminating, the tribal elites. When vulnerable to external aggression and internal

strife, the state, through the power of the tribal elites, and in spite of the future threat that they could pose to its own authority, would rule indirectly through key tribes. Iraq's history provides no western democratic blueprint to build upon, but an Arab one. The Iraqi people will have to discover for themselves some balance between the cosmopolitan urban elite and the inward looking culture of the countryside. The future Iraq will be the product of an on-going process of state and national definition. The first is a product of politics, the second of culture. In the short term, if engaging tribal groupings is required to enhance internal security, developing an appropriate tribal policy as part of a greater security system is crucial and could help establish a more secure environment for Iraq. Using tribes for internal security must be based on a thorough understanding of tribal affairs.

Chapter 5

COUNTER INSURGENCY IN THE TRIBAL CULTURE

“One who confronts his enemy for many years in order to struggle for victory in a decisive battle yet who, because he begrudges rank, honors, and a few hundred pieces of gold, remains ignorant of his enemy’s situation, is completely devoid of humanity. Such a man is no general; no support to his sovereign; no master of victory”. Sun Tzu, The Art of War.

The reason that CPA political and economic initiatives have not yet caught the imagination or secured the participation of the Iraqi people is due to cultural, not ideological factors. The greatest challenge for CPA is the lack of preparation of Iraqi society for new ideas and institutions, particularly those of alien origin. Pundits have compared the removal of the Saddam regime to the Allied defeat of Japan and Germany during World War II. While similar in many respects, it differs markedly in the preparation period for social change. The biggest difference between allied experiences in post-hostilities Japan and Germany and post-Saddam Iraq is that whereas both the German and Japanese regimes and the ideological basis for their existence were totally discredited, no such process took place in Iraq. The Iraqi people experienced no catastrophic defeat, such as the utter devastation of cities and civilian loss of life as in Japan and Germany, nor witnessed public trials of war criminals, or endured a long-term military occupation government. CPA policies have prompted no widespread Iraqi reappraisal of existing cultural values and institutions. The Coalition’s rebuilding efforts are challenged by traditional communal values toughened during the Saddam era. CPA’s good faith efforts, although encouraging the emergence of new social attributes and patterns of political power, cannot escape traditional political norms.

The greatest challenge faced by CJTF-7 is how to conduct military operations in civilian areas with limited language skills and or cultural understanding. The unintended consequence of alienating the population when innocents are inadvertently injured or killed, or humiliated when their sense of honor has been violated, adds to the operational challenges faced by the Coalition.

Counterinsurgency can be defined simply as an organized activity designed to counter or neutralize insurgency. Counter Insurgency planning emphasizes the intellectual and psychological aspects of military operations to assist in creating the conditions for an opponent’s political defeat. Experience has shown that counterinsurgency is most effective if designed to achieve integrated and mutually

reinforcing military and political strategies. A successful counterinsurgency requires a careful blend of military and civilian political action coupled with information operations as the main focus. Politicians and commanders must identify the relationship of military means relative to other aspects of policy. A successful counterinsurgency campaign synchronizes, coordinates, and deconflicts various governmental initiatives to neutralize the insurgent's political potential, while the military focuses on the insurgents themselves.

In general, the size of geographic areas and the types of insurgent activity conducted in each area depends primarily on the degree of control exercised by the governing authority. The degree of control of an area will fluctuate with the effectiveness of the Governing authorities overall internal defense and development effort; the size of the insurgent force; and the attitude of the population. Coalition forces are currently operating in either friendly controlled or contested areas. Insurgent operations in friendly controlled areas are normally limited to raids, small ambushes, sniping, and mining operations. Insurgents in contested areas may not offer determined resistance to the entry of friendly forces into a given area, but will execute harassing operations instead. Examples of contested areas are the areas between the Syrian border to the Sunni triangle and from Sulaymaniyah south to Baqubah.

When insurgents first become operational, they engage in limited or small-scale attacks. If insurgent forces are permitted to reach a level of mature organization, training, and equipment, larger scale operations may commence. The operational advantage as to when to conduct small or large scale military operations lies with the insurgent. One of the insurgent's operational strengths is the capability to escalate or de-escalate methods of operations from subversion through open warfare.

The insurgent movement will attempt to influence the tribes using psychological and political techniques. The tribal center of gravity that may be exploited is shame and honor. Honor is regarded in the Arab culture above life itself and without honor a man would be considered dead. A man's place in the tribe, as well as the tribe's place among other tribes, is measured in terms of honor. Hence the Arab saying, "It is better to die with honor than live with humiliation."

Insurgent's control of the tribes will be established through a network of loyal tribal leaders. Attempts are made to make every member of the tribe feel that the CPA and CJTF-7 has shamed them and to

regain their honor by becoming part of the struggle. The greatest danger to the insurgency movement is if its popular base of loyal tribes can be won away and realigned with the CPA.

Critical to the governing authority's counter-insurgency effort is the removal of the popular base from the insurgents. One security option is the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps is a CJTF-7 initiative to support the Coalition Provisional Authority's core function of establishing a safe and secure environment in Iraq.⁴ Members are recruited locally and will operate predominantly in their home areas. Civil Defense Corps units are projected to relieve CJTF-7 of point security missions thereby freeing them for offensive counter-insurgency operations. Once trained, these units are expected to be a significant force multiplier, increasing the effectiveness of CJTF-7. Upon completion of individual training, Civil Defense Corps units will initially augment CJTF-7 with language and cultural knowledge, timely human intelligence and contractor support including driver and security assistance duties.

The Civil Defense Corps template should be reevaluated in tribal terms. Personnel are locally recruited and deployed in their home areas. This makes them a tribal constabulary by default. This organization may well provide an ideal mechanism for restoring honor to the tribes and confidence-building measures between tribal leaders and the CPA to be enacted in select areas. Many of the tribal sheiks that have been debriefed in the C2 Strategic Debriefing Office, located at CPA Baghdad have expressed the desire to secure areas within their control. It is noteworthy that the repeated requests for weapons, communications equipment, and vehicles represent continuity with the past. The change in regime has not, as far as the sheiks are concerned, changed state-tribe relations. A number of sheiks are prepared to swear allegiance to Ambassador Bremer who, as is expected, will direct them to ensure security and stability in their tribal areas. In return, loyal tribes expect to be provided with light arms and ammunition, communications equipment, vehicles and logistic support to carry out security related tasks. Tribal leaders' belief in a continued security relationship with the CPA provides an opportunity to exploit the Iraqi Civil Defense concept and expand the initial penetration of tribal culture. If the CPA/CJTF-7 is unwilling to relinquish total operational control within well-defined parameters, tailoring the Iraqi Civil Defense units for specific tribal areas is recommended to help restore a safe and secure environment in Iraq.

⁴ See Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 28, 3 September 2003, "Establishment of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps".

An excellent location to try a restructured ICDC is in the province of Al Anbar. The leadership in the Sunni triangle will find it difficult to justify to its constituents the placing of its young men under the control of Coalition officers. To mitigate this concern of Al Anbar's tribal leaders, Special Forces Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE) would live and serve along-side select Civil Defense forces constituting young men provided by the tribes of Al Anbar.

LCE teams would provide the critical link, not only in communication and direction but also, and more importantly, in cultural terms between the tribes and CJTF-7. This arrangement would provide for the tribal leadership to maintain its honor by retaining the appearance of sovereignty at the local level, while the Coalition retains indirect military control. Control by the Coalition over the tribes is exercised in the distribution of resources such as funds, contracts, and investments in the area. This relationship must be managed on a quid-pro-quo basis. While conventional forces are very capable of defeating direct threats, they lack the temperament to navigate the subtleties of tribal politics. Special Forces soldiers are sensitized to the subtle maneuverings and conspiratorial thinking inherent in tribal diplomacy. As this relationship develops, trust and confidence on both sides increase, and the Coalition footprint could gradually be reduced, freeing Coalition resources for other uses. Reduction of the Coalition footprint would be based on the cooperation of the tribal leadership and success of the Civil Defense units to maintain a safe and secure environment. Metrics for success could range from disruption of Former Regime Loyalist operations, capture or destruction of foreign fighters, or the return of illegal weapons such as MANPADS to Coalition authorities. Concurrently, as a safe and secure environment emerges, CPA outreach programs could expand into other social, economic, political, and cultural spaces.

The value added of establishing an office to research, analyze and assess the political aspects of tribal policy is clear. This "tribal affairs" office would comprise specially recruited military and civilian personnel with the desire to understand and exploit the internal tribal dynamics shaping tribal strategy. The tribal affairs office would draw insights from a variety of disciplines ranging from socio-cultural anthropology, tribal genealogy (both fictive and real), alliances and confederations, and religion to establish cultural informational parity with the insurgents and greater insight into the internal dynamics of tribal politics.

Tribal warfare is more political than military in nature. It is certainly military in the tactical sense, but is actually political, since tribal warfare generally stems from local power struggles. Tribes fighting for local political gains may assist the Coalition to achieve its military objectives. Armed with knowledge that a tribal affairs office would provide, Coalition commanders and the CPA will be able to not only develop local security strategies, but also political initiatives, by exploiting insights into the internal dynamics shaping tribal decision makers.

Tribal Center of Gravity (COG)

The tribal COG is the cultural construct of shame and honor. According to David Leo Gutmann, professor of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University Medical School, tribal members seek to avoid humiliation and to acquire *Sharraf*, or Honor. Shame/Honor is an irrational feature of Arab psychology, particularly in their profound vulnerability to humiliation due to perceived loss of honor. Gutmann writes, “Any opponent worth fighting is by definition honorable, and pieces of his honor can be ripped from him in a successful raid, to be replaced by figments of the attacker’s shame. The successful attacker has exported some personal shame to the enemy, and the enemy’s lost honor has been added to the raider’s store [of honor].”

Center of Gravity Analysis

Center of Gravity

Cultural construct of Shame and Honor.

Three-quarters of Iraq members of one of nation’s 150 tribes.

Critical Capabilities (CC)

Bound by family ties, strict honor code. Primary source of power outside Baghdad (alternative system of power/shadow government/economy).

Positioned to negotiate power-sharing agreements.

Tribal militias.

Critical Requirements (CR)

Access to Governing Council/central government patronage system.

Manpower. The stronger the tribe and/or confederation, the greater influence over local government

Critical Vulnerabilities (CV)

Recognition of sheik by the state.

Different allegiances (political, personal, religious, professional).

Inter-tribal/kinship conflicts.

(shadow government).

Susceptibility to manipulation based on
Shame/Honor Construct

Avoiding the Tribal Trap

CJTF-7 will be challenged in collecting tribal intelligence without the cooperation of at least some key leaders who hold a form of traditional authority. Coalition attempts to by-pass traditional authorities and deal with the local population directly will fail. A “reliable” sheik may assist us in arresting looters, smugglers, terrorists, and former regime loyalists, who in many cases also happen to be tribal rivals. By assisting the Coalition, the “friendly” sheik will advance his tribe’s interests while harming those of his rival. Many of the tribes will have sheikhs that are willing to cooperate with the Coalition and the Governing Council but there will always be one or more rivals, usually close relatives that are “rebellious”.

This “tribal rebellion” will more often than not be provoked by disagreement within a leading family of the tribe, or a conflict with a neighboring tribe rather than by disaffection with the Coalition or Governing Council. This apparent split between tribes and/or their leading families into pro-and anti-government factions may not always reflect a serious conflict dividing the family, however. In some cases it will be the consequence of a deliberate decision not to put all of one’s eggs into one basket – a time honored strategy of elite families everywhere. Loyalties will follow prevailing winds of power and interest. Without careful planning and consideration we will be drawn into the power politics of tribal society with its perpetual conflicts and rivalries without a clear appreciation of the rules and rituals.

In order to avoid the tribal trap, an intimate understanding of the indigenous population within an operational area is essential. Successfully incorporating tribal groupings into a comprehensive security system depends on understanding beforehand the intricacies of tribal politics. Prior to approaching a given tribe, CJTF-7 must complete a detailed tribal study of that tribe. After making contact with a select tribe, analysts would continue to add to this background knowledge by a thorough and continuous assessment of the area, personalities, kinship ties, and individual leader and tribal ambitions. Thus armed with intelligence acquired before and after contact, policy makers are better able to integrate tribal groupings in an operational area into a coordinated and effective force capable of supporting theater political and military objectives.

An initial analysis of tribal politics should draw a clear distinction between a tribe's strategy vis-à-vis the central government, and a tribe's internal social dynamic. Once the differences are identified and understood, CJTF-7 can link internal tribal social dynamics and its political and martial expression, to exploit internal factors shaping tribal strategy. Two crucial components of a tribe's internal dynamics are the segmentary nature of tribes and the tribe's moral center of gravity.

Tribal liaison officers in the countryside augment the capabilities of the tribal affairs office and support the local commander. Proper employment of tribal liaison officers develops a predictive analysis capability, supports the local commander's security operations by engaging the civil population located in an area of operation, and supports the intelligence collection and analysis process. It enhances the CPA and Coalition Commander's development of situational awareness and understanding and supports the application of effective security measures in the execution of assigned civil and military initiatives.

Tribal liaison officers must think in terms of a "protracted popular war" when employed in their respective "tribal areas". A successful protracted popular insurgency depends on establishing parallel hierarchies or shadow institutions that "out-administer" CPA's existing political and social structures. Success is defined by the insurgents' ability to successfully organize and effectively implement planned programs that undermine Coalition efforts.

Engaging the tribe is not just simply a business arrangement or political strategy, but a relationship. This relationship is based on a concept of "brothering" between CJTF-7/CPA and tribal groupings. The development of a mutually beneficial relationship with corresponding obligations requires nurturing. To be effective, one must become a subject matter expert in all things pertaining to the tribe. This means that liaison officers must get to know the families, friends and enemies of the tribe they live with. Tribal liaisons must understand the rituals, family politics, myths, legends, and lineage of "their" tribe and must understand that status is a function of the community. Even tribes that are considered "undesirable" to work with have to be engaged by CPA/.CJTF-7, because the "undesirables" may be the key to winning over an entire tribal confederacy.

The mission of the tribal liaison officer is to co-opt traditional leaders by establishing a relationship through daily contact, exchange of information, and participation in tribal celebrations and rituals. Developing an appropriate relationship requires patience and commitment and is best described as an

on-going conversation. Patronage is an important part of this relationship and once entered into requires the utmost care in maintaining it. Negotiating with tribes is not simply a matter of drawing up a contract, or developing a codified policy for dealing with tribes, something the conventional army is wont to do to simplify matters. Cookie cutter policies can assist initial efforts but would only be the beginning of greater study.

If successful, the tribal liaison officer will establish the civil population, and its political and social structures as listening posts (LP) and observation posts (OP) deep inside “contested” territory. This creates depth in time and space for appropriate reaction to physical (foreign military operatives, former regime loyalists) and informational (hostile propaganda, rumors) threats. Additionally, it shapes the environment so that CPA and Coalition initiatives are at least given a fair hearing by the rural leadership and provides an opportunity for the rural population to participate in the decision making process within their own cultural context.

Annotated below is a generic template identifying the phases of engaging tribal communities.

Phase I - Define an area of responsibility. A tribe may not reflect a cohesive grouping inhabiting a “traditional territory”; it may be dispersed in various parts of the country, with many of its members residing in larger metropolitan areas. Many of its members may work in diverse occupations. “Sheiks” are sometimes urban professionals or businessmen.

Phase II - Establish a working relationship between various families and clans. A working relationship may be based on an economic association under the guise of a “tribute system”. This system is a structure of fictive kinship in which sheiks accept a position of ritual subordination. The relationship is expressed through periodic missions in whom the “tributary” or his envoys perform required rituals, such as providing information, intelligence and evidence of government support in return for patronage and gifts (infrastructure repairs, security contracts). The “tributary” in return believes since he helps the Coalition, he is entitled to patronage derived from tribute presentation. Such a system could work well only as long as both parties agree to see what they chose to see in it and not to put their opposing interpretations to the test.

Phase III - Establish a security, intelligence collection and communication system.

Phase IV - Civilian Support.

How much influence can the Central government exert?

The capital of any state has long been recognized as the center of not only the administration of the state but also of a nation's social, professional, and political activity. The CPA's preoccupation with Baghdad must not neglect the important question of who controls the landscape beyond the confines of the capital. The question of how much influence the central government will exert has yet to be determined. One thing is certain; control at the local level will continue to operate at its own rhythm regardless of the intentions of Baghdad. What occurs in the governates has as much influence on the center as acts of the central government has on the governates. Thus, the study of the center has to be complimented by the study of rural conditions. The rural elites will no doubt continue to administer justice, mediate quarrels, maintain public order, administer relief, guide public opinion, control markets and smuggling, and provide access to the patronage system. Unity should never be mistaken for uniformity.

The CPA's guidance that no tribe will be paid or any tribal leader dealt with exclusively is a consequence of politics and the role of fundamental Western cultural orientations in defining them. It should be understood that since the CPA is unable to accommodate the degree of equality required in a tribal – Coalition relationship, accommodations with select tribal communities may be practiced as a temporary tactic, albeit within well-defined parameters, but cannot legitimately be raised to the level of strategy without violating western political norms. This course of action has one key drawback, by neglecting the tribal leadership in rural areas, the Coalition will be unable to project power into the countryside and co-opt tribes to provide a base for its own attempts to exert influence and pressure on insurgents.

By abandoning the tribal leadership, the Coalition will not only lose access to power brokers in the countryside capable of keeping the peace, but jeopardize its own security as well. Overt patronage and access to power strengthens political cohesion in this part of the world. But this system of obligation for assistance is not the western way. While a punitive expedition may be appealing both militarily and politically in the short term, regular maintenance of subsidies is less so.

Standard tribal strategy, in terms of negotiating with the central government, is often to use or threaten the use of force to win concessions. This means that to the extent that the central government is able and willing to meet tribal needs, the threat of violence may be averted, or at least restricted in scale. If

the many attacks against existing power and oil infrastructure are reevaluated in tribal terms, these actions may be attributable to tribal groups demanding their share of the profits. Profit sharing in this case is defined as payment for providing infrastructure security or extortion by deliberate acts of sabotage or theft of property the Coalition or the central government values.

There are three options for dealing with the tribes available to the Coalition Provisional Authority at this time. The first is the deconstructionist approach, which focuses the primary effort on breaking down tribal communal allegiances and the Sheikh's control over the tribe. Sheikhs are marginalized and individuals are empowered and encouraged to actively participate in the social, economic, political, security, and cultural spaces. Communal allegiances are redirected to the nation and the state. The second is the Reconstructionist approach, which focuses the primary effort on empowering communal allegiances with Sheikhs and groups encouraged to actively participate in the social, economic, political, security, and cultural spaces. The final option is to exploit tribal culture and the tribal network by engaging and empowering tribal leaders selectively in the security and cultural space for instance, while concurrently engaging, empowering, and expanding detribalized segments of society in the rest.

The first line of operation, the deconstructionist approach, is very difficult to achieve in the short term. Pervasive family and quasi-family relationships make Iraq a vast kinship network in which the only kind of social relations known are those imposed by custom, moral code, and religious laws. These socio-cultural relations are expressed as recipient-to-benefactor, client-to-patron, and servant-to-master relationships make emancipation of individuals and social groups radically impossible in the short-term. The deconstructionist approach is also the most dangerous since it attacks the very essence of tribal culture and by default members of the tribes themselves.

The second line of operation, the Reconstructionist approach, is undesirable in the long-term. Tribal groupings adhering to customary laws and codes represent a potentially uncontrollable parallel governing structure inherently at odds with the goals and desires of any future Iraqi government. Inter-tribal tensions are inevitable due to fierce competition among smaller and less powerful tribal groupings. Since clans and tribes are not equal in terms of status, power, size, patronage, and wealth, competition may be expressed in vendetta and tribal banditry (as evident among select tribes of the Dulaym Confederation in the vicinity of Al Qaim and along the Baghdad – Ar Ruthbah – Amman route).

Exploiting the tribal network in the short-term for security to influence long-term change is the preferred option, but by far the most difficult. Success depends upon a detailed understanding by the CPA of the Tribal Ethos, culture, and concepts and distributions of tribal power. CPA/CJTF-7 expertise in tribal diplomacy, negotiating skills, a talent for subtle maneuvering, and an appreciation for conspiratorial thinking, are the prerequisite for success in engaging tribal leadership. On the other hand, the potential payoff for engaging in tribal diplomacy while exploiting the tribal network as a medium for social change is well worth the attempt. Engaging select tribes to establish a safe and secure environment provides the CPA an opportunity to penetrate an area to begin reconstruction and economic development programs, exploit initial success, and expand into the economic, political, and social policies that will allow for a democracy to take root in the long run. While expanding in the tribal controlled areas, programs to redirect communal allegiances to the nation and the state are introduced and sustained. For example, the CPA's initiative to provide for a "Systematic Review of Interim Local Advisory Bodies" characterizes an exploitation strategy in a tribal area. Engaging non-tribal entities for support, empowering and expanding their influence, sustains the effort for long-term change.

The CPA's outreach strategy within Al Anbar Governorate seeks to address the "disenfranchisement" of the Sunni community. Its goals are to "promote and empower indigenous, legitimate political activity" and to "encourage dialogue and cooperation with Coalition on both the political and security fronts". Implied in the concept of the Sunni community, whether as official CPA policy or not, is a willingness to recognize and include tribal groups. For this strategy to succeed, detailed knowledge of tribal adversaries and supporters is required to effectively employ Coalition capabilities and resources.

Chief among those policies to be settled upon by the political and military leadership is whether a tribal policy is required to preclude a tribal based insurgency and enhance security. In the final analysis, a rational tribal policy is needed for the following reason: ***tribal politics remains the basis for most social and political discussion in Iraq and must by default be considered in any future political solution.*** A well reasoned tribal policy is a key component in developing a counter-insurgency plan since long-term security solutions must be tailored to succeed within a tribal cultural context.

This tribal cultural construct was understood implicitly by the Saddam regime. In 1996, the Ba'ath Party initiated measures to reorganize state-tribe relations by redefining duties and rights of tribes' vis-

à-vis the state. A High Council of Tribal Chiefs (HCTC) was established with direct access to the President. Sheiks by mandate swore absolute allegiance to the President, who remanded them to ensure security and stability in designated districts. The state delegated judicial powers to the sheiks to settle tribal disputes and granted financial powers to exact taxes and penalties on behalf of the government. In return, sheiks received light arms and ammunition, communication equipment, vehicles, and logistic support to enforce government policy.

. Three tribe-state liaison channels were established. These consisted of the Presidential Office for the more powerful and influential tribes, the Tribal Office in the Ministry of Interior, and the National Security Bureau. It is noteworthy that the mental momentum of these measures to reorganize state-tribe relations continues to this day. It is not surprising that many tribal sheiks continue to arrive at the Presidential Palace for an audience with Ambassador Bremer, the sheik of sheiks. He is considered the most powerful sheik, and in line with the 1996 reorganization, the Presidential Palace represents one tribe-state liaison channel.

Prior to receiving an audience with the Ambassador, tribal sheiks are debriefed in the C2 Strategic Debriefing Office. The sheiks understand that the Coalition interviewers are serving intelligence officers, and as far as the sheiks are concerned represent the second state-tribe liaison channel. The Iraqi members of the Ministry of Interior have already announced plans to establish a tribal office. This corresponds to the third state-tribe liaison channel between tribes and the MOI. Understandably, as far as the representatives of the tribes are concerned, nothing has changed in state-tribal relations with the arrival of the CPA.

Ritual, in tribal culture, comes before substance. Western-based community outreach policies designed to “encourage dialogue and cooperation with Coalition on both the political and security fronts” will not pierce the tribal wall. Western-based conflict resolution models applied in non-Western contexts seldom recognize the importance of indigenous ways of thinking and feeling, nor do they take into account local rituals for managing, reducing, and resolving conflicts. Acknowledging indigenous patterns of perception and practice will help identify preexisting rituals for dealing with conflict as well as culturally appropriate prescriptions for peacemaking.⁵

⁵ George E. Irani and Nathan C. Funk, “Rituals of Reconciliation: Arab-Islamic Perspectives”, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper #19:OP:2, August 2000, page 2

The population of Al Anbar Governorate, rather than a cohesive assembly of citizens bound together by an agreed-upon set of rights and obligations, consists instead of competing communities requiring absolute allegiance and obedience from its members. Every one of these communities feels that the other tribes have victimized them in one way or another. Coalition military activities, as well as civilian programs, perceived to favor one community over the other has added an additional ingredient into this volatile mix. Any process of acknowledgement and reconciliation will have to begin at the communal rather than the individual level, with the active participation of important group leaders.⁶

The Western view of conflict as solvable has led many proponents of conflict resolution to identify random, as well as organized violence as symptoms of a need for social and structural change. Tribal culture takes a more pragmatic, or if you prefer, a less optimistic view. It accepts that conflict, regardless of its nature, may well be intractable. Conflict can evolve through phases of escalation and confrontation as well as phases of calm and return to a status quo ante. Far from implying mere submissiveness in the face of conflict, such views are often associated with efforts to deal with incipient conflict quietly and indirectly by mobilizing social forces to control and reduce violence, and even to strive for comprehensive reconciliation when circumstances appear promising.⁷

Rituals are used in private or unofficial processes of conflict control, reduction, and resolution to restore the status quo ante. These unofficial, informal processes are not controlled by the state. Instead, traditional steps are taken by tribal leaders to restore justice and social harmony. Sometimes both official and unofficial justice is invoked simultaneously, to nurture peace and reconciliation.

The CPA must therefore be prepared to perform two crucial rituals for its outreach program to work, a “Restitution and Reconciliation” ritual and negotiate a formal “truce”. For example, a “Restitution and Reconciliation” ritual with the groups of tribes that lost family members in the 23 April 2003 shooting incident in Falluja and to negotiate a “formal truce” with competing communities to reestablish the status quo ante. The rationale for performing the restitution and reconciliation ritual for the incident in Falluja is based on the assumption that no formal “closure” in the form of ritual has occurred between CJTF-7 and the tribal members in Falluja. Restitution payments to individual families must include the reconciliation ritual. The fact that reconciliation did not take place may be a

⁶ Ibid, page 12

⁷ Ibid, page 4

contributing factor in the ongoing violence, expressed in the form of vendetta killings, in the Al Anbar region. Reports from the area indicate that the indigenous population is also concerned that the “death of innocent bystanders”, a concern that may create new antipathies. Reconciliation and a formal truce may contribute to a reduction of tensions, by restoring Honor taken from tribal members by the Coalition. These simple cultural initiatives are the first step in shaping the conditions for exploitation and expansion of CPA initiatives into tribal areas.

As mentioned above, exploiting the tribal network in the short-term to influence long-term change is the preferred, but by far the most difficult option to provide a safe and secure environment in Iraq while laying the foundations for a western style democracy. Success in tribal engagement depends upon a detailed understanding of the Tribal Ethos, culture, and concepts as well as distributions of tribal power. Lacking this information, we will almost invariably be drawn into the power politics of tribal society with its perpetual conflicts and rivalries. We should not engage in a game without a clear appreciation of the rules and rituals that regulate play. In order to avoid the tribal trap an intimate understanding of the indigenous population within an operational area is essential.⁸

⁷ William S. McCallister, “Integrated Security System: Requirement for a Well Reasoned Tribal Policy”, 29 September 2003, page 10

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as perhaps, you think it is.

T.E. Lawrence, 'Twenty –Seven Article', *Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917

Former Regime Loyalists, Foreign Fighters, and Tribal warriors are keeping CPA/CJTF-7 from creating a safe and secure environment in Iraq. Former Regime Loyalists and Foreign Fighters comprise a Restorationist insurgency movement to restore Former Regime officials opposed to CPA/CJTF-7 to regain political and economic power. This is different from Tribal warriors who may not actually support the insurgency, but fight to avoid humiliation and to acquire *Sharraf*, or Honor. Tribal warriors may provide assistance to insurgents or attack Coalition forces, but their motivations for resistance are cultural, not ideological.

Tribal engagement policy will co-opt key tribal confederacies to help secure a safe and secure environment in Iraq. Tribal engagement will address the root causes of tribal violence, that being the need to regain honor, as well as to help stop the flow of arms, money and foreign fighters through porous borders, which has been successful on several occasions in modern Iraqi history. In addition tribal engagement supports a counter insurgency effort by denying freedom of movement by Foreign Fighters and Former Regime Loyalists in tribal areas and popular base of support.

Planners need to use tribal engagement as a shaping effort prior to the commencement of any maneuver operation. Tribal engagement cannot be successful if it presents the “carrot” and the stick” ***at the same time***. A successful counter insurgency campaign must synchronize various governmental policy initiatives to neutralize the insurgent’s political potential.

Three of the most effective means to implement a tribal engagement policy are the creation of a tribal affairs office which would be responsible for addressing the needs of tribal leaders and their constituents as well as providing intelligence and analysis; the appointing of tribal liaison officers responsible for establishing a personal relationship with tribal leaders while ensuring that tribal leaders act in concert with CPA policy and guidelines, and recruitment of additional Iraqi Civil Defense units along tribal lines who are loyal to CPA and CJTF-7 to provide local security under local leadership.

Planning, momentum, and strategy are critical for an effective outreach program to take shape. What is crucial is that all planning and strategic conclusions must be based on an understanding and appreciation of tribal culture. This understanding must include concepts and configurations of tribal power, kinship ties and how cultural processes influence an area under consideration. The Saddam regime exploited tribes to ensure his hold on power. A detailed appreciation of the Tribal Ethos, on the other hand, will assist in favorably positioning the CPA to pierce the wall of tribal culture and to shape tribal choices to create a nation.

The crucial question remains how to develop the position of tribes without compromising the values we are attempting to inculcate into in a post-Saddam era Iraq? Will Coalition efforts impart a new set of Iraqi national values or reinvigorate traditional tribal values. In time tribal organizations may acquire a new function in a multi – party democracy. Since it is imperative for the competing political parties to have strong grass roots representation, party candidates may be either tribal elders themselves or individuals put forward by tribal elders as their representatives. Affiliation with a political party will prove highly profitable for the tribes for a number of reasons. When their party is in power, it provides the possibility to reward its loyal supporters in various ways, most conspicuously in the form of infra-structural investments and government contracts. Elected deputies, even for opposition parties, remain the best advocates for local interests. In fact, a large share of deputies' time is spent in receiving people from their constituencies who request various services. The political parties themselves may therefore find many tribal elders quite eager to join them, irrespective of their political programs. Rival tribes may join different parties. Competition between the political parties thus will be a reflection of tribal conflicts and rivalries. Elections become the occasion for the redistribution of important resources (in the form of government patronage) at the provincial and local levels. The electoral process thus will come to shape important aspects of the mode of operations of tribes. Through their insertion into the political process, tribal leaders will gain control of additional resources that will consolidate or

strengthen their positions within their own tribal environment. Electoral politics may reinvigorate tribal society, and prove to be highly compatible with formal modern politics.

This in turn will negate the conditions that must be achieved for an insurgency to succeed. The nation of Iraq will have a populace free from influence of the former regime, Restorationist that can no longer provide direction, a government that has achieved control; and a society that has regained honor.

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A p p e n d i x

Moral Center of Gravity

Undermining a strategic center of gravity is critical to achieve self-sustaining stability. An opponent's strategic center of gravity will invariably include one or more moral centers of gravity. The process involved with identifying a tribe's moral center(s) of gravity begins and ends with people. Only people can create and sustain moral resistance. These consist of three general categories:

The Leader – the individual who has the will to develop, execute and/or sustain a policy of opposition to a potential rival along with the ability to exert his will through his militia and/or people.

The ruling elite – a closed group within which the real power of the tribe is located. This group might loosely be described as the “sheikh makers”, who between them direct policy and wield control over the militias and/or people.

Population – a large grouping of people who share a common belief that sets them in opposition to another grouping and holds this belief sufficiently strongly to engage in, and sustain conflict with a rival.

Without a correct assessment of moral centers of gravity, a given tribal strategy is not likely to succeed. Therefore, one of the key functions of intelligence should be to address these questions and provide answers, or at least well-reasoned, and well-founded educated guesses. Below are a number of questions to help identify moral centers of gravity

1. Is the strength of will of the population such that it doesn't matter who is their leader? If the population (or large proportion of it) feels so strongly about a policy that their leader(s) cannot prevent, deflect, or dilute their will, then the population itself is a moral center of gravity.
2. Does the authority to appoint a new leader (or dismiss the old one) lie within small elite, who could simply elect one among several of their own to become a new leader, pursuing largely similar policies? If so, the elite is a moral center of gravity.

3A. If the present leader died, would another leader with similar outlook and policy likely replace him? If so, odds are that neither the current leader nor his likely successor are or will be moral centers of gravity.

3B. On the other hand, if the present leader were to die, is there a chance that his successor might effect a dramatic change for the worse (from the rival's point of view) in the nature and effectiveness of the "tribal" policy of resistance/opposition? If so, then said replacement leader should be viewed as a potential moral center of gravity.

3C. Despite answers for the above questions, is there reason to believe that the present leader somehow, someday, is making a decisive difference in the nature and effectiveness of the "tribal" policy of resistance/opposition and that the situation from the opponent's perspective would improve in his absence or death? If so, then the present leader should be (also) viewed as a moral center of gravity.⁸

⁸See Dr. Joe Strange and Richard Iron, "Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities, Part 1: What Clausewitz (Really) Meant by Center of Gravity" pages 11-12 at <http://www.maxwell.af.mil/an/awc/awcgate/awc-thry.htm#strategymodels>